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WHY ARE WE IMPERIALISTIC ?

Immediately after the death of Senator Hanna a leading New York paper published an interesting editorial deploring the introduction of commercialism in politics and laying the blame at the door of this senator. It was no doubt an influence in political affairs before the campaign which Senator Hanna managed, but the exigencies of that struggle very much intensified the temptations to the illegitimate use of money. The whole campaign was avowedly a financial contest and arrayed the two classes of society against each other in a way to invoke economic as opposed to moral forces in the settlement of it, and consequently placed in power the commercial spirit which was fortunately on the side of morality at the same time. But the outcome has been the instalment of commercialism as the dominant agency in our present politics, a situation also initiated and sustained by our tariff policy. But whatever the causes, all serious thinkers are conscious of it and deplore it. The same persons and a group of malcontents are equally strenuous in their antagonism to imperialism. Commercialism and imperialism are in reality the same thing in our political condition, though the incidents of their action might be independent of each other. The antagonism which they arouse, however, comes less from a conflict of interests than from the struggle of the old with the new morality, if the new can be called morality at all. The anti-imperialists stand for the old moral ideals. They are trying to stem the tide against them by ap-

peals to standards which are no longer effective. They are judging a new age by the ideals of an old one, and exhibit some of the pessimism consequent on such a point of view, though this is tempered and modified by the optimism of the old political ideals of democracy. But they do not realize the fundamental change that has taken place in the moral conceptions of men, involving the substitution of the economic for the religious ideal of life, if I may summarize the conflicting tendencies of the age in these terms. They imagine that society should act on moral ideals which are decadent, and do not realize that imperialism is the only saviour of what political order can be obtained from the new tendencies.

The status of civilization at any time and in any large or small community is determined by the general ideas which prevail in it. It is not always on the surface that they can be found, because they are as often unconscious as conscious. It is also quite as true that the dominant idea may not be what appears on the surface, though the surface is affected or even determined by it. What men are most conscious of is their immediate wants and tendencies, while the great instinctive and unconscious impulses determine the general tendency of communities below the surface. We think, for instance, that trusts and corporate combinations are our great danger, or some other evil which we immediately feel. But, in fact, these are mere symptoms of other and wider influences which are not generally appreciated, and for that reason cannot be directly approached. The exigencies of political interest prevent us from studying the real causes for the tendencies we deplore. There is no time to instruct the public in regard to the general ideas affecting social improvement, and they are sensible only of the more immediate agencies affecting life and action. Hence the great ideas, conscious or unconscious, do their work without the chance of regulation. It will be necessary to define these general ideas as a means of bringing them into plain recognition and to show why we are in the conflict between the old religious civilization and the new imperialism.

The primary influence in the modern movement may be dated in 1859, the year in which Darwin published the "Origin

of Species." The tendency originated long before, but it obtained its best expression in the scientific truth assumed or established by Evolution. All social, religious, and ethical conceptions have been modified in deference to that doctrine, and none but those who have been educated in the old morality and felt the difficulties of the transition to the new can fully appreciate the nature of the change and its consequences. We have drifted away from the religious ideal of the past to that of the economical, and Evolution has been the most effective agency in relaxing the allegiance of men to the older ideal.

To make this clear and to prepare the way for understanding whither we are drifting it will be necessary to define what I mean by the moral or religious and the economic ideal. By the economic ideal I mean the pursuit of material ends of life with the sensuous pleasures most naturally associated with the attainment and expenditure of wealth. By the moral or religious ideal I mean the cultivation of those intellectual and spiritual virtues that make character independent of possessions beyond the necessities of life. This moral ideal divides itself into two general types: that which confines its operation to present incarnate duties and minimizes or neglects the consideration of the future existence of the soul, and that which makes the center and goal of human endeavor to be a life beyond the grave, and so subordinates the incarnate to a discarnate existence. Greco-Roman civilization was based upon the pursuit of the economic ideal with its adjuncts of science and art, educative of the intellect and sensuous pleasures. Christian civilization was based upon the moral or spiritual ideal with adjunctive reference either to a discarnate existence or to personal moral character, and so was educative of the will and the higher spiritual emotions. The political systems correspond to the two different ideals.

The reason for this connection is patent. If man lives for the pleasures of wealth he naturally neglects the non-sensuous experiences and accentuates the impulses which create the aristocratic society and its political methods. If he lives for another than the present life he cultivates a consciousness that is spiritual, even when it is associated with sensuous experience,

and tends to recognize that measure of equality between men which is the antidote to aristocracy. The struggle for existence in the economic life has no mitigations, and the aspirations are for material splendor and show. The struggle in the spiritual life, when this tempers the economic, places its emphasis upon the inner development of the individual, and the material world is depreciated or subordinated to the higher. Greco-Roman civilization was purely sensuous and the passions of men had to be governed by political power equal to the emergency. Christian civilization was purely non-sensuous and the government was within. When its ideal is realized, force is not necessary, and imperialistic tendencies are modified.

The imperialistic movement in recent times is not simple in its origin. It is the fruit of very complex influences, though they can all be summarized in the decline of the religious and the rise of the economic or materialistic ideal into predominance. This imperialism has embodied itself in two tendencies, namely, in the conflict between capital and labor and in the policy of exploiting or desiring to exploit colonial resources. Both are representative of the dominance of economic ideals. They would be less intense than they are if the older religious conceptions could maintain their integrity, or the social ideals that were at least nominally the associates of these religious ideals. But with the brotherhood of man discredited by the aristocratic conceptions fostered by the doctrine of evolution, and the immortality of the soul considered an illusion, the chief moral restraints upon an undue economic struggle are dissipated, and a reaction from the mediæval conception of life becomes all the more extreme, according to the luxurious fruit of the scientific and industrial conquest of nature.

We speak to-day of the struggle between capital and labor as if it were peculiar to our own times and conditions, and as if it were unique in its nature. But the fact is that it is only more intense and massive than it has been in the past, because it is organized on both sides. It is really only another term for the conflict between the rich and the poor which is perennial. It will probably prevail as long as inequalities exist between men, but will have its intensity modified by the associated ideas

that help to compensate for these inequalities. It will be useful to examine its nature in different civilizations in order to ascertain what it is which gives the struggle so much poignancy at present. We may then understand the influences which tend to produce the need of strong government.

The struggle between capital and labor, or between the rich and the poor, is the point at which we can best study the natural and artificial agencies that affect the course of history, whether it be one of progress or regress. The natural instincts in men are for the assumption of certain inequalities between them and their fellows; the artificial efforts, especially in the Christian system, have been for equality, at least of a certain type. The struggle between these tendencies has been that between aristocracy and democracy, the former tending to embody itself in some form of imperialism. The concentration of the problem is in the conflict between class instincts affected by economic forces rather than the spiritual. We have only to look at history to see that Greco-Roman civilization, as well as modern, was determined by the relation between capital and labor, or between the rich and poor, as it is usually expressed. But it was tempered by different moral and social considerations. Antiquity was aristocratic, imperialistic, and despotic in its feelings and political methods, whatever name we may happen to give its institutions. At no time did it place the same value upon the individual as characterizes modern civilization, in its sentiments at least. The distribution of corn in the Roman Empire was not dictated by any interest in the beneficiaries, but was a device to save power and to escape the difficulties created by the conflict between free and slave labor. There was no recognition of human rights in the question but only of power to destroy social order as then organized. Hence the struggle in Greco-Roman civilization was not one between recognized equals, but one between recognized superiors and inferiors. But this class distinction, while it was supported by economic inequalities, was primarily based upon lineage, and the rights of this distinction were conceded. No dangers would threaten such a society as long as there was no demand for social equality, or as long as the standard of living was equal to the rank

admitted. In this order the struggle for existence was not for equality, but for the sustenance of social rank in one class and for a living in the other, with no competition, economic or otherwise, between the two classes. Its civilization was materialistic in all but its social conceptions, and these were constantly threatened by the capricious domination of the economic ideal.

But Christianity came in with its doctrine of immortality and the brotherhood of man, both conspiring to create the sense of equality between men and the hope of compensations for the poor in their sacrifice of wealth to social caste. It thus set up a new standard in the struggle for existence, and this was for social equality based upon moral as distinct from economic criteria, upon character as opposed to possession or wealth. Hence the modern struggle between capital and labor partakes of the assumption that it is between equals, between persons having the same moral and social rights, an assumption that in no way governed ancient civilization. The materialistic conceptions of antiquity offered no hope for compensation in a future life in return for patience and concession to the successful, while the recognition of social distinctions removed the motive for pressing the struggle for existence against the higher classes. But Christianity offered compensation for disappointed hopes in this world by a chance for another life with its reward for virtue, patience, and humility, while its doctrine of human brotherhood instituted a social force which tended to equalize men and to counteract the asceticism tending to associate itself with the belief in another life. The two influences together conspired to produce democratic institutions, in that the one emphasized the value of the individual and the other the social equality of men. A little later I shall note the historical development of these ideas. At present I only wish to observe the ideas which overthrew ancient civilization and initiated modern tendencies.

As Christianity placed its ideal life beyond the grave it set up a powerful motive for patience and hope against the misfortunes of the present life, and where the individual could not expect or demand social equality or attain economic success he

could hope to be rewarded for the virtues which were practiced in submission and faith. On the other hand, the doctrine of human brotherhood set up a conception which made men jealous of artificial social distinctions, and so instated a principle to destroy aristocracy and imperialism. It took a long time for these influences to work their way out into general recognition, and it was not effected until the Church reorganized society in its ecclesiastical system which is so well called the Holy Roman Empire, wherein it sustained a strange association of imperialistic and democratic ideas, its imperialism being in its methods of government and its democracy being in human interests perfunctorily carried out in the service of personal salvation. The effect was to very greatly modify the struggle for existence. The ancient struggle was between master and servant, the relations between both being recognized as necessary, and hence between aristocrat and plebeian. The modern struggle is between recognized equals, in the estimation of the moral and religious mind, that is between those who feel that they are on the same social level, whether they are so in fact or not. In the ancient system the criterion of class distinctions was not so much wealth as it was blood or lineage. Wealth was secondary, and this still prevails in the minds of aristocratic people in continental countries. In the modern system, which is either democratic or tends to this as its ideal, the distinction cannot be blood so much as wealth, and the aristocratic sentiments in democratic communities expresses itself in materialistic forms and not in character. Wealth is the product of voluntary effort. It tends to create personal pride in successful effort, though its attainment is usually as much due to chance as to intelligence. Blood and lineage are not determined by the individual who is to take pride in them. They are inherited qualities. The individual cannot be censured for having them, nor is he the subject of moral praise for their possession. A social system based upon them cannot excite the same jealousies as one based on personal achievements. If wealth be a criterion of social standing, and the only criterion of this, it will be the prize of individual effort, unless hereditary, and even if hereditary will not enjoy any better advantages in the social scale than

wealth personally acquired. In a democracy which cannot or will not sustain class distinctions based on blood and lineage, and inheritance of wealth by primogeniture, and which has no moral or spiritual ideal, wealth personally won must be the determinant of its civilization, and it will be easy to calculate the outcome for it under such conditions. Its social and other struggles will not be for moral qualities but for the material means to support a materialistic civilization.

Any one who is familiar with the moral and religious ideals of our colonial history will recognize its thoroughly democratic character. It was made so by the immigration of an unaristocratic population and by the religious system of the citizens. Though all who came from the old world were animated by the desire to improve their material conditions of life, the accompanying desire for religious liberty and the attachment to their religious views of life were strong enough to keep economic influences more or less in abeyance. Economic resources were as much appropriated to support the spiritual ideal of life as in support of physical existence. Christian brotherhood was the conception on which social and political institutions were regulated, whether it was accompanied by the proper feeling or not, and though the conception did not take a socialistic or communistic form. The social and religious sentiments of the community represented antagonism to the aristocratic and monarchic institutions of Europe, and hence were imbued with the idea of equality which implied brotherhood, if it did not embody its feelings and tendencies against class distinctions. The Revolution solidified these sentiments, and as a protection against their political influence our institutions were specifically based upon political equality and aristocratic distinctions excluded from them. The ideas and passions that produced the Civil War illustrate the nature of the social fabric in regard to liberty and equality. It was only in the Confederate States that aristocratic tendencies prevailed, and here the sense of inequality was associated with and fostered by slavery. Where the idea of equality was dominant and patriotism was directed to democratic sentiments slavery perished, and under the ægis of the old religious ideals class distinctions involving any-

thing like aristocratic tendencies were either suppressed or kept in abeyance. Imperialistic tastes and proclivities found no expression. But since recent years all the conceptions fostered by colonial times have vanished.

But what are the influences that have brought about this change, this revolution of ideas and sentiments so profoundly affecting the body politic? The full answer to this question is a complex one, but the fundamental cause is an alteration in religious beliefs affecting the main tendencies of so many centuries. It is no doubt complicated with various incidental causes, which many mistake for the fundamental ones, such as the increase of population, combinations of capital and labor, invention and industry, and the growth of wealth. But these influences, however much they may be operative as social forces, are wholly dependent for their incidence upon the moral and religious ideas with which they are associated. If human equality still prevailed as an effective social force and if the present life were a probation for another or believed to be such, these agencies would still be able to direct and modify all other social influences. But both these intellectual and moral agencies have been dispossessed from control, and all by the cumulative force of those influences which were concentrated in the doctrine of Evolution, as disturbing the integrity of theological ideas and the old ideal of respect for the weak. Let us trace briefly the history and conflict between theological and scientific conceptions and its influence on social and political methods.

Christianity, whatever its essential idea and primitive impulse, in its practical development was a curious mixture of various tendencies made workable by a peculiar adjustment of the relation between the present and a future life. It could not easily or at once overthrow the existing class distinctions and hence, after the failure of its social objects, which were those of equality and fraternity, the system became a combination of moral interest in the poor and a personal interest in happiness after death bought by humanity in this life. I do not divest the system of genuine human impulses, because there were many who took a less sordid view of it than this implies. Otherwise it could not have lived and conquered civilization.

But it had adjusted the egoistic and altruistic instincts in such a way that the egoistic enjoyments were postponed until another life and their sacrifice purchased by altruism in this. Alms, penance, poverty with patience, faith, and humility were the price of a happiness in the next world that the struggle for existence in this amidst human passion and sin would not permit. In reaching this position the system was a compromise between the social scheme of its founder and the selfishness of ancient civilization that admitted no general duty to humanity at all. It compensated the sacrifice of earthly goods by a spiritual reward. The selfish instincts remained the same in their intensity, but were diverted into a new channel and directed to a new object, so that the struggle for existence was tempered by an exaltation of the spiritual and a depreciation of the economic ideal. Social and class distinctions were left intact and the logical consequence of the primitive system in social equality and fraternity left unenforced, while the unsuccessful in life could hope, if virtuous, for an equalization of things, or even a reversal of relations, in another world.

The influence that cemented these agencies together and produced an evasion of the organization of social reforms was the philosophic system of beliefs that formed a cosmogony and theology conceived in behalf of the fundamental interest of man. All practical life is regulated by some belief, and the influence of that belief is more general and cohesive in proportion to its comprehensiveness and its organization of the primary human instincts. The comprehensiveness of the Christian scheme when developed into its cosmic conceptions involved a doctrine of creation, both of matter and its complex forms, and a providential dispensation subordinating all things to one general purpose, and that purpose was the salvation and happiness of those who properly revered the Creator. It appealed to the most fundamental instinct of the human mind, namely, self-preservation and the hope of immortality. This whole theological system was crowned by a doctrine of inspiration which was the intellectual equivalent of the political authority that dominated ancient ideals and out of which it arose. Agreement and unity of action had to be obtained, and this could not

be done without invoking the spirit which had maintained them in the civilization in which the new ideas arose. Individuality of belief and sentiment were incompatible with the organization of harmonious action, and hence to give effectiveness to the whole scheme the inspiration and authority of it were invoked to protect it and make it inviolable. It is and was the pivotal doctrine on which turns and turned the cohesiveness of the system and determined the power it had over men in general. It was the only conception which could hold an uneducated democratic order under control, and the ecclesiastical system was democratic in its claims whether it was always so or not in its methods.

But the Renaissance and the intellectual tendencies represented by it marked the beginning of the end of this system. They have been long in effecting the result as a dominant factor in the present social order. But wherever they took possession of an individual or communal mind they turned it in the direction of free thought and became more or less a restoration of Greco-Roman ideals, with the retention of enough liberty to prevent the immediate reinstallation of despotism. The movement at first embodied nothing more than the admiration and imitation of Greek literature, but it soon imbibed its intellectual and scientific spirit which was animated by the ideal of naturalism as opposed to supernaturalism, a present as distinguished from a future life, human experience as contrasted with transcendental things, present actual realities as opposed to the imaginary and impossible. Protestantism was the logical outcome, and following this by the same process of development was absolute rationalism, which reduces all authority to individual judgment or nothing. This tendency was in the interest of democracy, but it has not carried with it an effective spiritual ideal that would prevent anarchy without imperialism. Old conceptions were either eradicated or transformed. The effect was the same in either case. Authority was dispossessed and men left to form their own judgments. Man became the master of what had previously mastered him. Instead of blind obedience to tradition, he either converted it into some meaning subservient to present interests or cast it into oblivion. This

spirit creates a new tendency, or is the result of it. The life of dependence on authority is either inert and unaggressive or it is dogmatic and intolerant. It shrinks before nature instead of mastering it. It obeys and will not direct. But once question the inspiration and authority on which past civilization fed, and whether the idea be transformed or nullified, the assumption of reason to decide all matters of belief and action is a signal for independence all along the line. If we are not to passively submit we must govern, and this spirit, when it once possesses the mind, arouses a passion to conquer nature instead of serving it, and science, invention, and industry are the consequence, and with these comes the morality of struggle.

Now the doctrine of Evolution did for our conceptions of morality what science and literature did for our conception of nature as opposed to the older theological ideas. It was the climax of all the movements of thought in the direction of the natural, and turned man into an imitator of what is around him as distinguished from his mere ideals. Science would not permit him to believe in the past unless it was made intelligible in terms of present experience, and it remains agnostic of a future that cannot support its probability by evidence in this same present experience. The past ceased to awe or inspire, and the future was too doubtful to influence his motives, unless it was inferrable from the present, so that when authority was once banished from account there was nothing left but experience to guide action. Evolutionary morality offered the present order of things as a model and this is the struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest which is merciless for the weak, and in the social order represents what is euphemistically called "business," a deadly competition for economic goods and pleasures. As the spiritual virtues had no prospect of reward there was left only the worldly ambitions to satisfy. Invention gave him an astonishing mastery, almost unlimited, over nature, which he rules and subordinates to his own ends instead of obeying it for its blind fate, so that his natural comforts and conveniences have been multiplied and intensified until the idea of a future bliss as described by religion, even if certain, pales before the enjoyments of the present order. At one time future

bliss was something to make us endure the present, which was so full of pains and disappointments, but under the modern materialistic mastery of nature heaven offers no fascination even for the imagination, and when it becomes doubtful of possible realization it exerts no power to restrain materialistic tendencies, but rather stimulates to the attainment of as much as is possible out of the present existence alone. In this situation the old moral ideals are ineffective. We have only to look about us to see that they have no more influence on national life. The Church which embodied them has succumbed to the general spirit of the age. It cannot preach as of yore the hope of heaven as a compensation for misfortune and defeat here, but accepting the conception that a divine order, if it exists, must be found in the present, either endeavors to cultivate science and art or engages in the revival of the social reforms of its founder, and in both inevitably gets involved in the materialistic accomplishments and rewards of an earthly life, all of which are well enough if tempered and spiritualized by justice and humanity. But the Church has lost the ideals for whose primary emphasis it has always stood and has to face the reinstatement of a purely materialistic civilization, and in the absence of those beliefs which made it distinctive in its nature and motives has no object which cannot be served by science and literature. Since the time of Kant it cannot argue effectively or clearly regarding either God or immortality, though it sighs for these ideals with all the inconsolability of Hecuba for her children when they cannot be restored to her. The consequence of this situation is that all it can do is to passionately reiterate, in general terms, the morality of its founder and then grope about for a spiritual ideal to justify its existence.

In the meantime Evolution teaches it that nature has no mercy for the class which Christian morality insists must be cared for at all costs, and in default of a spiritual ideal which either offers a reward for virtue or represents a credible belief in the same conservation of personal consciousness as is found in inert matter, men are left to pursue material goods and enjoyments without the traditional restraints upon the sacrifice of the weak in the struggle for existence. If nature does not

offer permanence or respect for the highest ideals of life and action we must expect our morality to take the shape of material success. Passionately possessed of the idea of equality, on the one hand, as inherited from Christian thought, and taught the principles of aristocracy by Evolution, on the other, those demanding equality being the unsuccessful, and those with aristocratic feelings being their more fortunate rivals, in fact the exploiters of the unsuccessful in many instances, the struggle is intensified because it is hopeless of any spiritual compensation for material misfortune. The achievements of a spiritual life are subordinated to the material, and in the sacrifice the economic ideal obtains the domination with its aristocratic associations supported by the gospel of Evolution.

In the meantime economic developments involved in such achievements as the railways, the telegraph, the telephone, mechanical improvements in all departments of human activity and production, and the organization of labor and industry have given that solidarity to the incidents of wealth, both in its production and distribution, which enables the individual to exploit many with whom he never comes into contact, and thus these influences necessitate the action of strong government. The comprehension of large territories under the same economic and political institutions tends to form the same results. The demand for strong government necessitates the application of imperialism as the only means of meeting the exigencies of present civilization, and this imperialism arises in domestic conditions before it can become active in foreign or colonial affairs. This is instanced with us in the results of the Civil War, which was as much the effect of economic necessity as it was of moral allegiance to the idea of equality. The supremacy of the larger or imperialistic conception was evident in the Federal interpretation of our institutions, supported, however, by democratic sentiments, while the aristocratic sentiments of the Confederate cause were directed to the support of independent units of political organism against the unifying tendencies of the age. But the triumph of the Federal contention and the solidification of economic interests in the industrial system of to-day, governed by the struggle for existence, and without a spiritual

ideal to temper its character or to subordinate the passions of wealth, make the principles of imperialism more or less necessary, however unideal they may be in comparison with a civilization permeated with more spiritual conceptions of human achievement and enjoyment. All opposition to it comes only from those who are trying to cling to ideals that no longer exist, or to sustain the morality of faith on a basis of doubt. Nothing but the recovery of a spiritual ideal will redeem us from the rule of imperialism.

JAMES H. HYSLOP.

NEW YORK.

THE INTELLECTUAL INFLUENCE OF WOMEN.

It is, perhaps, characteristic of all permanent progress that it has to win its way by fighting; and in no branch of progress is this more true than in the improvement in the intellectual status of woman. Tradition, custom, pseudo-science, and, if I may say so, masculine vanity, have barred the way at every step; and on one position after another has been captured, the enemy has not yielded, but has merely retreated to take up another. Moreover, it cannot be overlooked that at each point of struggle there has been so much justification in the opposition offered that nothing less than the strongest evidence of justice and of righteous expediency could suffice to overcome it. Custom and tradition are generally right, *so far as they go*, and only a larger right can prevail against them. That which has been proved by generations of experience to be in some way beneficial to humanity alone has strength to maintain itself as custom and tradition against the changes of time; but no tradition is so firmly established that the hour may not come when it must be overthrown by a more vital truth. That the process should be slow and difficult is right; for the more difficult it is the greater must be the strength of the opposing truth to which tradition yields. And this is why in the modern history of women's intellectual progress there have been no backward movements. No passing freak or fashion could have prevailed against the strong opposing tradition; and every step forward